

## Program Notes by Elisenda Fábregas

*The Flaming Rock (La Roca Llameante)* was commissioned by the *Allegro Chorale and Orchestra Inc.* (Nyela Basney as Artistic Director). The world premiere will take place in Midland and Odessa (Texas).

The most challenging aspect of this commission was to make the text understandable to both the English and Spanish audience for whom this work was written. I decided then to include both the entire Spanish and English version of the text. To meet this challenge I used a variety of textural devices: dialogues between one voice in Spanish and the other in English, solos that sing in Spanish what the chorus has just sung in English, solos in Spanish sung between choir passages in English, echo and antiphonal effects, and narration. These textural devices have also helped me with the challenge of dynamically balancing the forces of a string quartet with a full chorus. I have kept the texture as transparent as possible in order to avoid drowning the string quartet with the full choir and to preserve the intelligibility of the text by using vocal solos, duets, trios, a cappella, solo strings, and string interludes in addition to full choir with strings in climactic moments.

The original seed of inspiration for this work came from a fantastic Native-American myth of the creation of the world. The myth contains a powerful central image of a rock exploding and rising through the water, bursting into flames and vaporizing into the air in clouds thus providing a home for all the spirits existing in the mind of Wakonda, the maker of all things.

The images that led to the “exploding rock” provided me with a clear structure for this work: the stillness and uncertainty of the beginning of the universe when nothing exists except in the mind of Wakonda; the sadness and disappointment of the spirits going about in space and floating through the air, searching for a place to call home and to become flesh and blood; an earthshaking climactic surprise when a great rock appears bursting into flames - rising through the vaporizing waters and becoming dry land; a sense of relief and resolution when the spirits become flesh and blood feeding on the seeds of the grasses and trees; the joy and gratitude of all beings to Wakonda, the maker of all things.